

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
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1. [New Arms-Cut Treaty Requires U.S. Senate Approval](#) (03-29-2010)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — After President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev sign a new arms-reduction treaty in a Prague ceremony April 8, the treaty will face scrutiny in the U.S. Senate and Russian Duma for final approval.

No one expects the process to be brief or without considerable debate. But while some in the Senate are concerned about potential limitations on missile defense, Obama administration officials are confident that these concerns have been adequately addressed in the treaty. Officials have said the planned U.S. missile defense network in Europe is limited in scope and not intended to pose a threat to Russia.

Senator Jon Kyl, a Republican from Arizona and a leading advocate of missile defense, told reporters recently that there should be no links between reducing nuclear weapons and a planned [missile defense system for Europe](#). The system is intended for use against rogue states that may use the weapons as a threat against allies in Europe.

“I’m looking forward to working with the administration, to evaluate it and discuss it with my colleagues, deal with it when it comes before the Senate, in a few months,” Kyl said in a press conference March 26. Kyl and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican from Kentucky, had sent a letter to the president saying that it would be difficult to support the treaty if it included any limits on the missile defense system.

Under Secretary of State Ellen Tauscher, who is responsible for arms control and international security issues, said at a State Department briefing March 29 that “there is no limit on what the United States can do with its missile defense system.”

“There are no limits to our ability to put the phased adaptive approach forward and the other systems that we have worked on in the past,” she said.

The new treaty is designed to replace the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), which expired in December 2009.

During a [March 26 White House briefing](#), Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the Senate has overwhelmingly approved arms control treaties it has considered most recently, and this new treaty should have broad support among senators.

The U.S. Constitution requires that for any treaty to be ratified, it must be approved by at least a two-thirds vote of the Senate — 67 of 100 senators. The process of approval is known as “advise and consent.”

“We’re going to engage deeply and broadly with all of the members of the Senate. And we’re also informing members of the [U.S. House of Representatives] as well,” Clinton said.

The Senate ratified the 1988 Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty signed by President Ronald Reagan and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev by a 93–5 vote. The Senate approved the 1991 START I signed by President George H.W. Bush and Gorbachev by 93–6, and the 2002 Moscow Treaty signed by President George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin by 95–0.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates told reporters at the White House briefing that during intensive, yearlong talks with the Russian negotiating team, there have also been continuing consultations with the Congress.

“Two of the areas that have been of concern in the Senate, among senators, are, are we protecting our ability to go forward with missile defense, and are we going to make the investment in our nuclear infrastructure so that the [U.S.] stockpile will remain reliable and safe,” Gates said. “I think we have addressed the concerns that there may have been on the Hill [Capitol Hill, the location of the U.S. Congress] and so I echo the sentiments of Secretary Clinton, that I think the prospects are quite good.”

In announcing the treaty, [Obama told reporters](#) he is looking forward to working with Congress. Earlier in the week, the president held an hourlong briefing with Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry and Senator Richard Lugar, the ranking Republican on the committee, in the White House.

CONGRESSIONAL RESPONSE

The White House will send the signed treaty to the Senate where it will be sent to the Foreign Relations Committee for hearings and a vote on sending it on for full consideration by the Senate.

“As soon as the president sends the agreement to the Senate, we will appeal to all our colleagues to set aside preconceptions and partisanship and consider the treaty on its merits,” Kerry said. “We can’t squander this opportunity to reset both our relations with Russia and our role as the world leader on nuclear nonproliferation.”

Lugar, who is considered one of the leading experts in the Senate on nuclear arms control, said that he is looking forward to “hearings and briefings for the Foreign Relations Committee so that we can work quickly to achieve ratification of the new treaty.”

“I commend the U.S. and Russian delegations for months of dedicated effort,” Lugar added.

In addition to missile defense, senators will be examining the verification process, an essential element of any arms control measure.

2. Obama Makes Surprise Visit to Afghanistan to Honor Troops (03-29-2010)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama made his first trip to Afghanistan as commander in chief March 28, using his surprise visit to honor U.S., Afghan and international troops and to meet with Afghan President Hamid Karzai to discuss anti-corruption efforts, energy and agricultural production and other civilian issues.

“I know this was on a little bit of short notice,” Obama told troops from the International Security Assistance Force for Afghanistan (ISAF) and the Afghan National Army in remarks at [Bagram Airfield March 28](#). To the American forces the president said, “I want you to understand, there’s no visit that I considered more important than this visit I’m making right now because I have no greater honor than serving as your commander in chief.”

Afghan and coalition forces are working together to “disrupt and dismantle, defeat and destroy al-Qaida and its extremist allies” like the Taliban, he said, with the objectives of denying al-Qaida safe haven in the country and reversing the Taliban’s momentum.

“If this region slides backwards, if the Taliban retakes this country and al-Qaida can operate with impunity, then more American lives will be at stake. The Afghan people will lose their chance at progress and prosperity. And the world will be significantly less secure,” Obama said.

“We’re going to strengthen the capacity of Afghan security forces and the Afghan government so that they can begin taking responsibility and gain confidence of the Afghan people,” he said.

The president told the troops that he understood their sacrifices and the ordeal of time spent away from loved ones. “If I thought for a minute that America’s vital interests were not served, were not at stake here in Afghanistan, I would order all of you home right away,” he said.

Saluting members of the Afghan National Army, Obama praised their willingness to protect their country and their increasing ability to take responsibility for Afghanistan’s security. He also thanked ISAF soldiers from other countries, saying al-Qaida and its extremist allies threaten people around the world.

“We’re so proud to have our coalition partners here with us,” he said. “Thank you very much for the great work that you do. We salute you and we honor you for all the sacrifices you make, and you are a true friend of the United States of America.”

This is a fight that matters, the president said. “Al-Qaida and the violent extremists who you’re fighting against want to destroy. But all of you want to build,” he said, and see “dignity in every human being.”

Extremists “want to drive races and regions and religions apart. You want to bring people together and see the world move forward together,” Obama said. “They offer fear, in other words, and you offer hope.”

Before meeting with military personnel, the president held talks with President Karzai in Kabul. After their talks, [Obama said](#), “I want to send a strong message that the partnership between the United States and Afghanistan is going to continue.”

“All of us are interested in a day when Afghanistan is going to be able to provide for its own security but continue a long-term strategic partnership with the United States,” Obama said.

Along with more progress on joint military activities, the president said he wanted to see continued improvement in civilian areas such as “agricultural production, energy production, good governance, rule of law, anti-corruption efforts.” That will increase Afghanistan’s prosperity, security and independence, he said.

White House press secretary Robert Gibbs told reporters traveling with the president March 28 that Obama invited Karzai for further talks in Washington May 12.

A senior administration official who asked not to be identified said Obama and Karzai discussed Afghan governance issues during their meeting, including the need for merit-based appointments of Afghan officials and efforts against corruption.

Since Obama and Karzai last spoke by videoconference March 15, the official said, the United States has seen improvements in local governance and the creation of more credible national institutions, as well as action against corruption.

National Security Advisor General Jim Jones told reporters that President Karzai “needs to be seized with how important” the problem of corruption is in Afghanistan.

3. New Treaty Reduces U.S., Russian Nuclear Arsenals (03-26-2010)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev finalized a landmark agreement that will cut the number of deployed nuclear weapons by 30 percent.

Obama and Medvedev completed the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which had been in negotiation for almost a year, with a telephone call March 26.

“I’m pleased to announce that after a year of intense negotiations, the United States and Russia have agreed to the most comprehensive arms control agreement in nearly two decades,” [Obama said](#) after talking with Medvedev.

“Since taking office, one of my highest priorities has been addressing the threat posed by nuclear weapons to the American people. And that’s why, last April in Prague, I stated America’s intention to pursue the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons, a goal that’s been embraced by presidents like John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan,” the president said.

Obama and Medvedev agreed to meet in Prague on April 8 to sign the treaty. It would replace the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) agreed to by the United States and the former Soviet Union, and also the 2002 Moscow Treaty.

“Broadly speaking, the new START treaty makes progress in several areas,” Obama said. “It cuts by about a third the nuclear weapons that the United States and Russia will deploy. It significantly reduces missiles and launchers. It puts in place a strong and effective verification regime. And it maintains the flexibility that we need to protect and advance our national security and to guarantee our unwavering commitment to the security of our allies.”

“With this agreement, the United States and Russia — the two largest nuclear powers in the world — also send a clear signal that we intend to lead,” Obama said. “By upholding our own commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, we strengthen our global efforts to stop the spread of these weapons, and [help] to ensure that other nations meet their own responsibilities.”

The agreement limits the countries to 1,550 nuclear warheads, which is 30 percent lower than the limit of the Moscow Treaty, which had set it at 2,200 warheads. The treaty also limits both nations to 800 deployed and nondeployed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers, submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launchers, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments.

The treaty has a separate limit of 700 deployed ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments.

The treaty’s formal title is the “Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures to Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.” It is commonly known as the New START Treaty. It lasts 10 years and has a provision for a five-year extension.

The [White House said](#) this was the 14th direct meeting or telephone conference between Obama and Medvedev on the treaty and it represents “their shared commitment to ‘reset’ U.S.-Russia relations.” Obama had made improving relations with Russia a major foreign policy objective of his administration, arguing that the Cold War of the 20th century is over and that the two superpowers are partners in the world.

The treaty includes a verification regime that will allow each side to monitor all aspects of the treaty. “At the same time, the inspections and other verification procedures in this treaty will be simpler and less costly to implement than the old START treaty,” the White House said.

“The treaty does not contain any constraints on testing, development or deployment of current or planned U.S. missile-defense programs or current or planned United States long-range conventional strike capabilities,” the White House said.

SENATE AND DUMA APPROVAL

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry and Senator Richard Lugar, the ranking Republican on the committee, met with Obama and his advisers for about an hour March 24 at the

White House and received a full briefing on the treaty and the support needed to win approval in the U.S. Senate, which requires a two-thirds majority.

The treaty also has to be approved by the Russian Duma before becoming law.

“A well-designed treaty will send an important message to the rest of the world that America is prepared to lead efforts with key stakeholders to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons,” Kerry said after the meeting with Obama. “Once the treaty and its associated documents are completed and submitted to the Senate, Senator Lugar and I look forward to holding hearings and giving the treaty immediate and careful attention.”

PRAGUE VISION

On April 5, 2009, Obama announced in [a major speech at Hradcany Square in Prague](#) that he envisioned a nuclear-free world and would make reducing nuclear weapons a signature piece of his foreign policy agenda.

“Today, I state clearly and with conviction America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons,” Obama told the Prague audience. “I’m not naive. This goal will not be reached quickly — perhaps not in my lifetime. It will take patience and persistence. But now we, too, must ignore the voices who tell us that the world cannot change.”

The United States is hosting a Global Nuclear Summit April 12–13 in Washington to promote a worldwide discussion on ways to control nuclear weapons and to begin the effort to reduce them.

“Such actions invigorate our mutual efforts to strengthen the international nonproliferation regime and convince other countries to help curb proliferation,” the White House announcement said.

[Obama on New Arms Control Treaty with Russia](#)

U.S., Russia reach deal on cutting number of nuclear weapons

[Obama’s Call with Russian President Medvedev on START](#)

New treaty limits warheads, missiles and bombers

[4. START Reflects U.S. Intent to Create Nuclear-Free World \(03-26-2010\)](#)

By Stephen Kaufman
Staff Writer

Washington — The landmark agreement between Russia and the United States to reduce their nuclear-weapon stockpiles by 30 percent marks a commitment by the Obama administration to its long-term goal of eliminating nuclear weapons, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton says.

Speaking at the White House March 26 with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen and Under Secretary of State for Arms Control Ellen Tauscher, [Clinton said](#) the steps the Obama administration is taking to reduce the number of nuclear weapons, stop nuclear proliferation and advance nuclear security around the world mark “a very clear statement of intent” to follow through on its vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

The new [Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty](#) (START) that President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev will sign in Prague April 8 demonstrates that “the Cold War really is behind us, and these massive nuclear arsenals that both of our countries maintained as part of deterrence no longer have to be so big,” she said.

The new treaty is the first comprehensive deal to reduce nuclear arms since its predecessor was signed by the two former Cold War rivals in July 1991.

“We do not need such large arsenals to protect our nation and our allies against the two greatest dangers we face today, nuclear proliferation and terrorism,” Clinton said.

The treaty “shows the world, particularly states like Iran and North Korea, that one of our top priorities is to strengthen the global nonproliferation regime and keep nuclear materials out of the wrong hands,” and demonstrates the U.S. commitment for progress toward disarmament under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), she said.

President Obama has invited one of the largest gatherings of international leaders since the end of World War II to Washington April 12–13 to discuss preventing rogue regimes and violent extremists from obtaining nuclear materials, and both the United States and Russia “come with more credibility” because of the treaty, Clinton said.

In May, the international community will also gather in New York for the NPT Review Conference, which Clinton said will discuss how to bring the nuclear nonproliferation regime “into the 21st century, when we know unfortunately that terrorist groups are seeking nuclear weapons.”

As the United States and Russia “uphold our commitments and strengthen the NPT, we can hold others accountable to do the same,” Clinton said.

“I’m going to reaffirm our commitment to convincing countries that the path of nonproliferation, of lowering the temperature when it comes to nuclear weapons, which we are doing with this treaty, is the path they want to be on,” she said.

Secretary Gates said having a nuclear arsenal is still “an important pillar of the U.S. defense posture” as both a deterrent to potential adversaries and to provide reassurance to “more than two dozen allies and partners who rely on our nuclear umbrella for their security.” But “it is clear that we can accomplish these goals with fewer nuclear weapons.”

“The journey we have taken, from being one misstep away from mutual assured destruction to the substantial arms reductions of this new agreement, is testimony to just how much the world has changed, and all of the opportunities we still have to make our planet safer and more secure,” he said.

“I don’t think anybody expects us to come anywhere close to zero nuclear weapons any time soon,” Gates said, but the new treaty and efforts to control fissile material and strengthen the NPT “are concrete steps to move in that direction.”

[White House Briefing on New START Treaty](#)

Clinton, Gates, Admiral Mullen speak on nuclear arms control agreement

5. U.S. and Russia would reduce strategic nuclear arms within seven years (03-26-2010)

Key Facts About New START Treaty

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
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Key Facts about the New START Treaty

Treaty Structure: The New START Treaty is organized in three tiers of increasing level of detail. The first tier is the Treaty text itself. The second tier consists of a Protocol to the Treaty, which contains additional rights and obligations associated with Treaty provisions. The basic rights and obligations are contained in these two documents. The third tier consists of Technical Annexes to the Protocol. All three tiers will be legally binding. The Protocol and Annexes will be integral parts of the Treaty and thus submitted to the U.S. Senate for its advice and consent to ratification.

Strategic Offensive Reductions: Under the Treaty, the U.S. and Russia will be limited to significantly fewer strategic arms within seven years from the date the Treaty enters into force. Each Party has the flexibility to determine for itself the structure of its strategic forces within the aggregate limits of the Treaty. These limits are based on a rigorous analysis conducted by Department of Defense planners in support of the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review.

Aggregate limits:

- 1,550 warheads. Warheads on deployed ICBMs and deployed SLBMs count toward this limit and each deployed heavy bomber equipped for nuclear armaments counts as one warhead toward this limit.
- This limit is 74% lower than the limit of the 1991 START Treaty and 30% lower than the deployed strategic warhead limit of the 2002 Moscow Treaty.
- A combined limit of 800 deployed and non-deployed ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments.
- A separate limit of 700 deployed ICBMs, deployed SLBMs, and deployed heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments.
- This limit is less than half the corresponding strategic nuclear delivery vehicle limit of the START Treaty.

Verification and Transparency: The Treaty has a verification regime that combines the appropriate elements of the 1991 START Treaty with new elements tailored to the limitations of the Treaty. Measures under the Treaty include on-site inspections and exhibitions, data exchanges and notifications related to strategic offensive arms and facilities covered by the Treaty, and provisions to facilitate the use of national technical means for treaty monitoring. To increase confidence and transparency, the Treaty also provides for the exchange of telemetry.

Treaty Terms: The Treaty's duration will be ten years, unless superseded by a subsequent agreement. The Parties may agree to extend the Treaty for a period of no more than five years. The Treaty includes a withdrawal clause that is standard in arms control agreements. The 2002 Moscow Treaty terminates upon entry into force of the New START Treaty. The U.S. Senate and the Russian legislature must approve the Treaty before it can enter into force.

March 31, 2010

No Constraints on Missile Defense and Conventional Strike: The Treaty does not contain any constraints on testing, development or deployment of current or planned U.S. missile defense programs or current or planned United States long-range conventional strike capabilities.
